

# North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

## NC Check-Ins

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### September 2016

The following FAQ has been developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to assist districts/schools in the implementation of the NC Check-Ins. This information should be used in conjunction with any published supplements or updates. Additional information about NC Check-Ins may be found at <https://center.ncsu.edu/ncaccount/>.

#### **Purpose, Participation, and Preparation**

**1. How will the 2016–17 Proof of Concept differ from the study conducted in 2015–16?**

For the Proof of Concept Study conducted in 2015–16, selected schools administered three interim assessments throughout the school year for grade 5 mathematics or grade 6 English language arts/reading and a stand-alone summative assessment at the end of the year. Teachers used the results from the interim assessments to inform their instruction and provide immediate assistance to students in areas where they were struggling.

For 2016–17, students will be administered three interim assessments and a stand-alone assessment at the end of the year. However, the number of participating schools at each grade/content area has been increased to approximately 15 percent, and volunteers are allowed to participate. The end of year assessment will be the standard EOG assessment that includes embedded field test items. Additionally, the name of the study has been changed from Proof of Concept to NC Check-Ins.

**2. How were schools selected for the NC Check-Ins?**

For the NC Check-Ins, the NCDPI selected a representative sample of schools that reflects statewide student demographics related to ethnicity, gender, previous mean scale score on state tests, and geographic location.

**3. How were the test specifications determined?**

The NCDPI invited teachers to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for a multiple-choice item format. Following the meetings, the test development team discussed the feedback with NCDPI Curriculum and Instruction to finalize the test specifications.

**4. Are parents able to request that their students not participate in the NC Check-Ins?**

Although the NCDPI recognizes parents' concerns about additional testing, the State Board of Education (SBE) does not allow students to opt out of required state testing, including field tests and special studies.

#### **Test Administration and Format**

**1. Are there assessment windows or can districts or schools determine the local window?**

LEAs/charter schools may determine the testing days for each NC Check-In within the NCDPI-designated assessment windows. The assessment windows for NC Check-Ins are as follows:

- NC Check-In 1: October 17–November 16, 2016
- NC Check-In 2: January 2–31, 2017
- NC Check-In 3: March 1–31, 2017

**2. Why are there three NC Check-Ins instead of two?**

A review of sampled district reports revealed that interim reporting to parents most often occurs every nine weeks for elementary and middle school students. Having three Check-Ins coincides with typical district reporting.

**3. What is the format of the NC Check-Ins?**

The NC Check-Ins are provided in paper-and-pencil format only.

**4. What are the number of items and item types on the NC Check-Ins?**

The Grade 5 Mathematics NC Check-Ins contain 21 multiple-choice items and 4 gridded response items. The Grade 6 English Language Arts/Reading NC Check-Ins contains 20 multiple-choice items.

**5. How much time will it take to complete the NC Check-Ins?**

Teachers will allow a maximum time of ninety (90) minutes for each NC Check-In. If all students finish the Check-In and are ready to turn in their books before the scheduled 90 minutes is over, the teachers may end the session early. The NCDPI will conduct time studies for each NC Check-In.

**6. Are proctors required?**

A proctor is neither required nor should one be used for the administration of the NC Check-Ins.

**7. Must test administrators remove displays from their walls for the NC Check-Ins?**

Teachers are **not** required to remove bulletin boards and instructional displays from walls.

**Accommodations and Alternate Assessments**

**1. Are instructional accommodations allowed for the NC Check-Ins?**

Yes, students with current IEPs, Section 504 Plans, or English Learner (EL) documentation may use instructional accommodations for the NC Check-Ins except for the Read Aloud and Signing/Cueing accommodations for the grade 6 ELA/reading. Reading aloud or signing/cueing the selections, questions, or answer choices on the ELA/reading Check-In invalidates results because the Check-In measures reading skills.

**2. Will there be an alternate assessment for the NC Check-Ins?**

There is no alternate assessment available for the NC Check-Ins. Students with disabilities who, according to their IEP documentation, participate in the **NCEXTEND1** alternate assessment in accordance with state policies do not participate in the NC Check-Ins.

**Scoring, Reporting, and Accountability**

**1. What is the time schedule for scoring and returning interim assessment results?**

The LEA test coordinator and the Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC) for charter schools will scan all Grade 5 Mathematics NC Check-Ins and Grade 6 English Language Arts/Reading Check-Ins. The score reports for these Check-Ins will be available on the day of testing.

**2. What type of information will be provided to teachers? To parents?**

Each NC Check-In will generate student-level reports indicating the number of items correct by content standard, item type, and selection type, and will report an overall score. Teacher-level reports will provide a summary with similar information. Parents will receive student reports with an overall score by standard and item number.

**3. Will reporting occur online or via paper?**

Paper reports are provided for the 2016–17 NC Check-Ins. Should the NC Check-Ins yield positive results and the SBE decide to move forward with field testing, then an online reporting system may be developed to provide results to teachers.

**4. Will the interim items be available to teachers after the administration?**

Yes, NC Check-In student books will remain available to teachers in the participating schools for five weeks following the Check-In administrations. After that time, schools must follow local procedures in securely destroying the student books.

**5. Will district and state comparison data be reported for the interim assessments?**

Data will be reported by student, teacher, and school. School and district comparisons will not be reported during the 2016–17 school year. The purpose of the NC Check-Ins is to provide teachers with student-level data to guide instruction.

**6. Will the NC Check-Ins “predict” performance on the EOG assessment?**

The NC Check-Ins administered during 2016–17 will not predict performance on the EOG assessment. In order to show prediction, there must first be a relationship. A relationship may be provided from year 1 to year 2 if the assessment model remains consistent across years. Year 1 may yield a prediction over time with enough evidence. The Check-Ins administered during the 2016–17 school year will be built using items from the EOG item bank. Although a prediction cannot be reported, there is direct connection from the NC Check-Ins to the EOG assessment.

**7. Will the NC-Check-In scores be included in accountability calculations?**

No, NC Check-In scores are not included in accountability.

**8. Will students receive achievement levels on the NC-Check-Ins?**

Students will not receive achievement levels for the NC Check-Ins.

**Other**

**1. Will sample districts/charter schools continue to administer local benchmark assessments?**

For best practices, the North Carolina Testing Program strongly recommends that sampled schools do not administer a local benchmark for the same subject in which they are participating in the NC Check-Ins; however, sampled schools may take a local benchmark in another subject. For example, a grade 5 student participating in the mathematics Check-In may take a local benchmark for English language arts/reading.

**2. Will feedback be collected from participants in the Proof of Concept Studies?**

Throughout the year, districts and charter schools will provide input on the processes and procedures as the NC Check-Ins are designed and implemented. The participating schools’ teachers will be provided with student-level data to inform instruction, and these teachers will have the opportunity to give feedback to the NCDPI on the usefulness of the data and the reports.

**3. What is the plan for 2017–18 and 2018–19?**

At the conclusion of 2016–17 and following the appropriate data analysis, the SBE will use the results of the NC Check-Ins to determine the best course of action for future state assessments.